

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 COME-00 DODE-00 DOTE-00 EB-07

FMC-02 INR-07 NSAE-00 SAL-01 CG-00 DLOS-06 OES-06

ORM-02 DHA-02 PM-04 H-02 L-03 NSC-05 PA-02 PRS-01

SP-02 SS-15 USIA-15 /093 W
----- 129824

R 040647Z DEC 76

FM AMEMBASSY CAIRO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9415
INFO AMEMBASSY BEIRUT
AMCONSUL ALEXANDRIA

UNCLAS CAIRO 16712

AMCONSUL PORT SAID SENDS

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: SREF, LE, EG

SUBJECT: LEBANESE REFUGEES AT \$60 A HEAD

1. AN AMERICAN BUSINESSMAN CALLED ON CONSULATE NOVEMBER 29, SEEKING INFORMATION ON ATTORNEYS WHO MIGHT REPRESENT HIS FIRM IN DISPUTE WITH LOCAL, PRIVATE SHIP AGENT. IN COURSE OF DISCUSSING PROBLEM, SUBJECT SAID THAT HIS MALTESE FLAG VESSEL HAD BEEN ENGAGED FOR SOME MONTHS IN CARRYING REFUGEES FROM LEBANESE PORTS TO EGYPT AT SIXTY DOLLARS A HEAD.

2. APPARENTLY, VESSEL HAD OPERATED FIRST OUT OF JOUNIE AND THEN, AS A NEW MARKET OPENED IN SIDON, FROM THE MORE SOUTHERN PORT. HE WAS RATHER BITTER THAT ON HIS VESSEL'S LAST PASSAGE, ONLY 20 OF THE PERHAPS 60 PASSENGERS WERE PAYING CUSTOMERS, THE OTHERS HAVING BEEN PUT ONBOARD AT GUN POINT, OVER MASTER'S PROTEST.

SUBJECT SAID THAT BECAUSE OF THIS, AND BECAUSE REFUGEE TRADE WAS NOW ALMOST EXCLUSIVELY PALESTINIAN, HE WAS ORDERING HIS VESSEL BACK TO GREECE FOR REFITTING AS
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SUMMER CHARTER YACHT. HE ALSO CLAIMED THAT VESSEL

GROSSED ABOUT \$150,000 IN REFUGEE BUSINESS, WHICH
APPARENTLY JUST COVERED VESSEL'S OPERATING COSTS.

3. ALTHOUGH OF MINOR CONSEQUENCE IN UNDERSTANDING COURSE
OF RECENT LEBANESE HISTORY, THIS CASE MAY BE OF INTEREST
TO EXTENT THAT IT IS PROBABLY NOT UNIQUE INSTANCE OF
COMMERCIAL SIDE OF CIVIL WAR. INDEED, RUMORS AND STORIES
CIRCULATING PORT SAID SUGGEST THAT MASTERS OF TRAMP
STEAMERS HAVE MADE SUBSTANTIAL PROFITS BY SELLING
DECK SPACE TO REFUGEES AND POCKETING MONEY.
SIGNED SURBER.
EILTS

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